

# ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

## MORE THAN 110,000 PEOPLE IN VIRGINIA HAVE ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OR RELATED DEMENTIA.

Alzheimer's is a disease of the brain that causes a steady decline in memory. Nearly 5.3 million Americans have Alzheimer's. This number will grow to 14 million by 2050.

Alzheimer's disease is the fourth leading cause of death among adults.

People with Alzheimer's lose their ability to recognize familiar places and faces. Many people cannot remember their names or addresses. They may become disoriented and lost in their neighborhood or far from home.

Reasoning, judgment, and behavior changes can also occur, making it difficult for a person with Alzheimer's disease to communicate with others.

MEMORY IMPAIRED  
TO HELP DIANE  
CALL  
1-800-572-1122  
# 1234

## 13,000 TO 15,000 VIRGINIANS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE ARE AT RISK OF WANDERING AND BECOMING LOST.

- 80% of people with Alzheimer's disease wander and become lost.
- 72% are repeat wanderers.
- 46% may die if not found within 24 hours.

A lost Alzheimer's person represents a critical emergency.

## THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS TAKEN ACTION TO HELP LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE.

In 1998, the Virginia General Assembly amended the *Code of Virginia*, authorizing the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Criminal Justice Services Board to set training standards for law enforcement officers.

In addition, an ongoing appropriation was initially provided to develop Alzheimer's/dementia training for law enforcement officers.

## ALZHEIMER'S TRAINING FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE OFFICERS IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE.

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association and criminal justice training academies, has developed training for both entry-level and incumbent law enforcement officers.

In 2004, training initiatives were expanded to include fire and EMS personnel. Working in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the Office of Emergency Medical Services, on-going training for all first responders is available throughout the Commonwealth.

The Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is the state agency charged with the authority and responsibility to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, emergency medical care system in the Commonwealth. This includes the regulation and certification of EMS personnel and agencies. The certified EMTs and Paramedics in Virginia provide care and treatment to more than 1.5 million individuals annually. The increase of individuals with Alzheimer's disease necessitates that EMS providers are properly trained to recognize the characteristics and appropriately handle these patients. The elderly are responsible for over one-third of the EMS calls for service. For more information on EMS, call Gary Brown at (804) 864-7600.



The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) coordinates fire-rescue training and certification activities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. VDFP is the only entity in the Commonwealth accredited by the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications, the "Pro-Board." VDFP delivers/coordinates training and certification programs in more than 65 subject areas statewide in the form of funded, non-funded, and reimbursable schools. For more information, call Billy Shelton at (804) 371-0220.

Current training programs available through DCJS include *Train-the-Trainer for all First Responders, Dispatchers, and Jail Officers*.

Additional courses are available for Commonwealth's Attorneys, Judges, Court Clerks, and Magistrates.

Our courses contain the following information:

- Overview and information on Alzheimer's disease and its characteristics.
- How to respond to calls for service (these may be separated based on the target personnel).
- Wandering/Lost/Missing: Search and Rescue techniques and management.
- Available resources for Public Safety Personnel.

Courses can be modified to address specific topics and audiences.

For more information about Alzheimer's/dementia training, contact Julie Ana Skone at (757) 692-0108. [www.dcms.virginia.gov](http://www.dcms.virginia.gov)

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To improve the safety of individuals with Alzheimer's, the Alzheimer's Association and the MedicAlert Foundation have created an alliance to bring you MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®. This program provides assistance whether a person becomes lost locally or far from home. A toll-free crisis number is available 24-hours a day, every day.

When a person with dementia wanders or becomes lost, one call immediately activates a community support network to help reunite the lost person with his or her caregiver.

When a person is found, a citizen or law official calls the toll-free 24-hour emergency response number on the identification product and the individual's family or caregivers are contacted.

The nearest Alzheimer's Association office provides support during search and rescue efforts. In addition, should medical attention be required, access to a personal health record is immediately available. There is an initial enrollment fee of \$49.95, with a \$25 annual renewal fee. Grants are available for those who need financial assistance. To enroll in the program, call 1-888-572-8566, call your local Alzheimer's Association, or visit the National website at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).



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## STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY IS BEING USED TO SAVE LIVES.



*Project Lifesaver International* was established in April 1999, as an initiative of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Search and Rescue (SAR) Company of the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office. *Project Lifesaver* places state-of-the-art personalized radio transmitters on identified persons who are at risk of wandering away from their homes and becoming lost.

The average time it takes for a person to be found using this technology is 30 minutes.

Since its development in Chesapeake, many cities and counties in Virginia have adopted *Project Lifesaver* and been trained by the 43<sup>rd</sup> SAR. Grants are available for

those in need of financial assistance. For more information about *Project Lifesaver* call (757) 546-5502, or 1-877-580-LIFE.

[www.projectlifesaver.org](http://www.projectlifesaver.org)

## SAR PROVIDES AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT.



The Virginia Department of Emergency Management coordinates a statewide network of trained search and rescue resources, available to assist law enforcement in searches for lost Alzheimer's/dementia subjects. State search resources are provided without cost to localities. For additional information call the SAR Coordinator at (804) 674-2422.

During SAR emergencies, you may contact the state emergency operation center at 1-800-468-8892.

[www.dbs\\_sar.com](http://www.dbs_sar.com)